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Atari Online News, Etc.  
A-ONE Online Magazine  
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A-ONE #0220

05/19/00

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->From the Editor's Keyboard  
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"Saying it like it is!"

This has been one of those weeks where I didn't mind so much that things were hectic because the week flew by! And, better yet, I'm on vacation until after the Memorial Day holiday! I'm in desperate need of some "mental health" days!

I'll be spending time playing some golf, working in the yard, getting the pool ready to open, and relaxing on the deck with quite a few cold ones! It's definitely going to be a week for rest and relaxation! It even looks like the weather is going to cooperate next week.

It appears that the government isn't going to let Microsoft off the hook after seeing its counter-proposal to the break-up plans. We'll have to see just how this all works out in the end.

I'm glad to see that the anti-spam movement is once again working to reduce or help eliminate the proliferation of spam. Spam is just as bad as telemarketing! Both are an invasion of our privacy. Want to sell me something, send me paper mail so it will cost you money and I can throw it in the trash without opening! I got CallerID just so I could ignore every "out of area" or "blocked call" message that comes up when my phone rings 4-5 times a night. Spam e-mail is a little tougher to notice, but they usually get deleted without opening. What a waste of everyone's time!

Until next time...

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->A-ONE User Group Notes!    -   Meetings, Shows, and Info!  
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Classic Computer and Gaming (CCAG) Fair 2000

The Classic Computer And Gaming (CCAG) Fair 2000 is being held at the National Guard Armory on Route 57, Lorain Ohio on the 16th and 17th of June.

The 16th is setup for people at the armory. The 17th is the actual show.

So far, TI and Atari groups are going to be there. Other groups are welcome! If you want a table, please email me. Setup times are on Friday afternoon, and early Saturday morning.

The CCAG 2000 is free to all comers. And for those looking for consoles and retro gaming, there is bound to be plenty for all to get, and deals galore!

Our Atari group here has two tables just for selling everything from 8-bit Atari to 16 bit ST's and equipment. Plus game carts.

Setup on Friday the 16th is 6PM to 10PM, with the fair opening at 9Am on the 17th. 9AM to 6PM.

ADDRESS/DIRECTIONS:

3520 Grove Avenue  
Lorain, Ohio 44055-2048

You need to get to 71 North, rather than 75. Take 71 North to 480/turnpike. Get on the turnpike and get off on the Route 57 exit. Go north on 57. The N.G. Armory will be on your left about 2 miles from the turnpike exit. On the corner of a park. Can't miss it.

See you at the CCAG!

Jim W. Krych  
Cleveland Atari Classic User Group

jwkrych@n2net.net

NOTE: Please email jwkrych@n2net.net with any questions about CCAG.

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING  
compiled by Joe Mirando  
jmirando@portone.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. I'm going to forgo my usual ranting and raving to talk about something that's not really computer related, but is very important none the less.

Last week in the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup our friend Dennis Vermeire posted the following:

Last week I got this mail from Jo Vandeweghe (Dipching), I realize that this is not really the right place, but...

Jo has send this mail privately to some people he knows quite well in Belgium and France, it's been on my mind and bugging me the whole week through....

<SNIP>

>I'm not used to do this, but I really need your "little" help ....  
>A few weeks ago, Louise, my 6 years old niece contracted leukemia and  
>she is now in a sterile room for about 6 weeks without the ability to  
>go out to see and/or meet her friends, only her parents are allowed to  
>visit, one at each time under very strict conditions ...  
>What I'm asking is: please, could you send just a little postcard to  
>her; this is very appreciated at this moment .... Just say hello on

>the card and she will be so happy for a few moments ...  
>  
>Send the cards to:  
>Louise Hespel  
>Clinique Saint Luc  
>Unit 82 - pediatrie  
>Avenue Hippocrate 10  
>B-1200 Bruxelles  
>BELGIUM  
>  
>I want to thank you very much for this action, which, though looking  
>so poor, will however be of an exceptional quality .... pure  
>happiness moments.  
  
>THANK YOU VERY MUCH.  
>  
>Truly yours.  
>  
>Jo  
>  
<SNAP>

Well, I suppose you'll all know what I would really like to happen? :-)

A simple postcard will not really cure the little girl, but should give the parents an enormous boost of moral, knowing that people from all over the world care....just think what a small attention like this would mean to yourself when facing a similar situation....

Cheers from Belgium  
Dennis

Now we all know Dennis. If not personally, then at least by his posts. And Jo needs no introduction to our community either. But more than that, there is something very simple that we can do to help someone... even if it's just a simple thing like a postcard. Having been a child in pain alone in a hospital, I can imagine how welcomed a brief respite like a postcard or two from some far away place might be.

Even if you don't know who Dennis or Jo are (so just where in the heck have you been??), there's still the "do something nice, just for the heck of it" aspect.

If I hear anything back from either Dennis or Jo, I'll be sure to keep you posted. If not, I guess the only way you'll ever know if she got any postcards is if you send her one yourself. How's THAT?? <grin>

Well, let's get on with the computer-related portion of the column. Okay?

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup  
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Paul Nurminen asks about a printer utility:

"I'm not sure if I have the name right, but there used to be a utility program that worked with PageStream (and possibly other programs as well?) that sped up printing a great deal. From my understanding, it really only worked if you were printing multiple copies of the same page (in PageStream

for example), as it kept the page in memory so PageStream didn't have to "recreate" it each time it printed.

Lately I've been using PageStream quite a bit, printing out multiple copies of the CD jewel case inserts for my [original music] CDs, and the long delay before it actually prints is becoming far too annoying!

I don't see the program on either Systems For Tomorrow's or Chro\_Magic's web sites unfortunately (yes, I'm in the USA). So, does anyone here know where I can get it, or whether it is perhaps freeware or shareware these days?"

Ken Springer tells Paul:

"It was series of printer drivers done by Straight Edge Software. In Canada, I believe. He also wrote drivers for Calamus. I have a copy, but not handy, and danged if I can remember the authors name."

John Garone adds:

"OutBurST is by Frank Pawlowski & Straight Edge Software in New Hampshire but I don't know if it's gone PD or Freeware."

Mike Harvey adds his knowledge about the program:

"Outburst was the program, it speeds up the TOS control's to the parallel printer port which greatly increases it's speed up to about twice what the standard TOS controlled rate was. I used it for some type until I got a SLM-605 laser which hooks up via a different method, but greatly speeds up something like a deskjet.. Even printing one page, it increases the rate the data is transferred to the printer, thus faster printing, for one page or more than one.. Don't think it matter's if your printing the same page multiple times or not."

Phil Walding adds:

"I had the same problem when I first started label printing (before my first postscript laser) and my workaround was GemSpool, where I could tell it to print hundreds of labels but only had to output it from Pagestream once. With the ram cache set high enough as a buffer between the disk spooled file and the printer port, the spooling was virtually unnoticeable if I wanted to keep working on designs while printing. The only thing I'd notice was an occasional fractional pause on the keyboard."

Paul tells Phil:

"That sounds like a good idea. Is GEMSpool available on any ftp or web sites that you know of, or was it a commercial program?"

Phil answers:

"It was shareware (at least the releases I have). I have two versions at least and I think the later ones had limitations of some sort (i.e. maximum spooled file size of 10k, or such like)."

Daniel Dreibelbis posts this announcement:

"Well, I'm doing a bit of work now as an unofficial "Atari guru" for the website MacGorilla (<http://www.macgorilla.com>), providing them with

info on some of the upcoming stuff for the Atari and Milan.

Check it out, and if you have an announcement Atari-related, be sure to drop off a tip or press release at the email link.

As well as Atari, they also deal with Mac, Linux and Amiga news. It's an interesting site."

TJ Andrews asks about ink cartridge refills:

"A while ago I wrote about getting a replacement printer for my SLM804. Well, I found a nearly pristine Deskjet 500 at a garage sale for next to nothing, and now I want to learn about refilling the ink cartridges.

I've seen ads on tv for a syringe-and-needle type of re-filler, and it looks like it should work well. Of course, tv ads always look that way. Is this the best type? I've seen squeeze bottle types in catalogs, and they don't impress me nearly as much.

Does anybody have any suggestions about where to get ink? I'm looking for a good price, but more importantly I'm looking for a good value. I'd rather pay \$30 for a pint of good-quality ink than pay \$20 for poor stuff. Of course, I'm not adverse to paying \$20 for that good-quality ink if I can get it.

What about cartridges? I understand there is a practical limit to how many times a Deskjet cartridge can be refilled, so I'll need new ones from time to time. While I can find them almost anywhere, even the local drugstore(!), I'd rather not pay that much. Where's a good place to find cartridges?

Is it possible to get a Deskjet 500 cartridge that is filled with a color ink other than black? I have an occasional use for green ink, if I could get it. I can use the green ribbon I have for my Epson 9-pin if I have to, but it just isn't the same.

Any tips anyone can give me on using the Deskjet would be greatly appreciated. I've been able to get it working ok on most things, but there are a few that elude me."

John Nicholas Oakes tells TJ:

"If your able to get hold of some cartridges and a refill kit you could try this method. With the colour (color) cartridges try and empty the Magenta colour.

A.. Carefully prise open the the grey cover cap, you will see three cells magenta, cyan and yellow. Now Syringe off the magenta as much as you can. This will leave you with cyan and yellow for you to fill. Then reseal with sellotape (clear tape) and set to print black. Eventually Magenta will clear the system and your left with Green from the mixture of CYAN AND YELLOW.

B.. Problem with Black only is that it has a small inflated bag inside, as soon as you open the cap. It is effectively useless, only refill version are better as the space is fill with a sponge. The two methods open to you, would be to have the cartridge filled at source or fill the empty black cartridge with equal amounts of CYAN AND YELLOW. I hope this will prove useful."

Marek Dankowski asks:

"Can you recommended for me a some good Fax Program for Atari ST?  
I prefer freeware/shareware."

Greg Goodwin tells Marek:

"I know a shareware solution exists (several actually), but I think every one I've seen is crippleware. I use STraightFax 2. It hasn't been supported for years, but fortunately, the FAX standard hasn't changed in years."

Edward Baiz adds:

"I use StarFax (comes with the StarCall Pro package). There is also Straight Fax...."

Greg Goodwin now asks:

"I know they're expensive, but I noticed recently that most LCD monitors have RGB inputs. Does anyone know if a LCD monitor could be used with a ST? I don't intend to try it, but I'm curious."

Shiuming Lai tells Greg:

"Yes, I've tried it with an Apple Studio panel. Hi-res only. It looked cool."

Paul Nurminen asks about his Falcon's keyboard:

"My Falcon's keyboard is getting a bit worn out I think.

Certain keys like "v", "2", [CONTROL], and "j" seem to occasionally not work. The situation improves a bit as the keyboard is typed on during a particular session. But when the computer is first booted after sitting for a day or so, they can take a bit of "working in" before they function reliably.

About 5 or so years ago, I did install those TT-Touch keyboard contacts, so I'm thinking some of them may be getting worn out. I know I have some extras, as well as my original "mushy" key contacts, but does this problem sound like something more is wrong, like maybe:

- Aging / cracked traces?
- Partially unseated chip?
- Chip going bad?

Any suggestions before I open her up and see what's going on?

P.S. I do have my old STE in the closet, so I guess if the keyboards are compatible I could swap that one into the Falcon???

P.P.S. And I do like the idea of Mario Becroft's PC-keyboard adaptor, but seeing as a very nice PC keyboard can be bought for less than \$10 USD here in California, the ~\$69 USD price of the adaptor seems a bit steep for me. (no offence Mario!)"

Jo Even Skarstein tells Paul:

The STE and Falcon keyboards are 100% compatible."

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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# Microsoft's X-Box Rocks E3 Expo

In a behind-closed-doors demonstration, Seamus Blackley, manager of the Advanced Technology Group, ran through a series of gee-whiz examples of what the X-Box can do.



The prototype console is an aluminum ``X" with a bright green center, making it look something like a rejected logo for ``The X-Files." Blackley said the design will be rejiggered before release of the console.

``We're 16 1/2 months away from launch," Blackley said. ``We're showing a lot more than anybody else this far out."

The graphics capability and sound of the X-Box were demonstrated via an interactive scene in a garden. Each of the more than 1,000 butterflies that populate the virtual garden were programmed to include artificial intelligence and physics models for a lifelike appearance. When the user zooms in to look at a butterfly, it skitters away.

The graphics chip was customized for the X-Box by manufacturer NVidia. The X-Box runs on a Pentium III processor chip.

All of these techie goodies will be used in the X-Box to encourage the talent behind video game design to push the envelope, Blackley said.

``In order to win in this market, you need the best games," he said. ``In order to get the best games, you need happy developers."

And since the X-Box was announced by Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates in March, developers have responded enthusiastically. Although Microsoft is keeping mum on game announcements until this summer, video game developers are some of the biggest cheerleaders for the console.

``X-Box is going to be the most powerful video game console that's ever been produced," said John Rowe, vice chairman of game developer Midway. ``Developers are going to make great games, and when consumers see these games, they're going to say, 'Wow, this is like playing television.' I think consumers are going to really perceive the X-Box as revolutionary."

#### Court Dismisses Most Sony Claims Against Connectix

A San Francisco court on Tuesday dismissed Sony's copyright and trademark claims against Connectix, the developer of Virtual Game Station (VGS). The decision should come as no surprise: In February, an appeals court lifted a preliminary injunction that prevented Connectix from shipping VGS. In that ruling, the judges sided with Connectix on the key issues in the dispute and remanded the case to the lower court for a final decision.

Sony alleged that VGS, a program that allows Macs to run many games designed for Sony's PlayStation, violated its copyrights. In Tuesday's ruling, Judge Charles Legge dismissed seven of Sony's nine claims against Connectix. The two remaining claims involve charges of trade secret violations and unfair competition. The judge has established a 90-day schedule for reviewing the remaining claims.

Connectix, in a press release, held out the possibility that the two remaining charges will also be dismissed.

"Once again, the court has found that both copyright and trademark law favor broad consumer choice," said Connectix CEO Roy McDonald in the prepared statement. "We are confident that we will prevail on the remaining issues. We hope that this decisive outcome will allow both parties to quickly close this matter and find ways to mutually benefit

from our innovative cross-platform technology."

Sony filed a separate action in February alleging that VGS violates its patents. Connectix said that a hearing on its motion to dismiss the patent claims will be held May 19.

## Ms. Pac-Man Makes 3D Debut as Star of Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness

### The Most Popular Female Video Game Character Ever Enters Another Dimension to Tackle a-MAZE-ing New Adventures

A year after Pac-Man's three-dimensional return, Namco Hometek announced today Ms. Pac-Man's upcoming lead role in the outrageously fun 3D action maze game, Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness, available this fall for the PlayStation game console, Nintendo 64 and Sega Dreamcast. Namco's latest Ms. Pac-Man title offers the original arcade version for the nostalgic at heart, while its enhanced environments and challenging puzzles will seize a new generation of Ms. Pac-Man fans.

With over 180 mazes and a myriad of puzzles, Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness offers endless exciting gameplay. Players can enjoy the game solo, "chilling" to its hypnotic grooves and mesmerizing state-of-the-art 3D graphics. In multi-player mode, Maze Madness pumps up the volume by allowing up to four players to engage in a variety of games, including Ghost Tag, where one player is Ms. Pac-Man feasting on dots, while the other players are the ghosts trying to feast on her; and Dot Mania, in which players compete to eat all the dots in a maze.

"It's fitting that Ms. Pac-Man, who turns 19 this year, has a new game where she exudes her world-famous attitude for fun and proves once again her awesome ability to conquer obstacles to get what she wants," said Mike Fischer, Namco's director of marketing. "The exotic and complex environments she travels through in Maze Madness are sure to satisfy fans of the original game and spur a new wave of maze mania."

Remaining true to the original game, no buttons are used in Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness, just directional keys. So that the game offers complex challenges, each level introduces new mechanics such as lava rivers, where Ms. Pac-Man must push ice blocks onto molten lava to save herself; lightning corridors, where she uses lightning switches to divert bolts and avoid being struck; explodable barrels, which allow Ms. Pac-Man to blow up and pass through walls; rev wheels, which allow her to move faster; and popper pads, which propel her to desired locations she can't get to on foot. In all, over 30 new mechanics are included.

Ms. Pac-Man journeys through four distinct worlds, facing 15 new enemies--in addition to a gang of hungry ghosts--on her path to the Witch's Castle, where she must defeat her ultimate foe. Not only has the Witch turned the Enchanted Palace into Haunted Halloween, she has kidnapped Professor Pac and a beautiful princess. In each world, Ms. Pac-Man must collect a virtue gem and several icons to reverse the Witch's evil spells and gain entrance to another world. A-maze-ing worlds include:

\*Cleopatra - Players must help Ms. Pac-Man avoid spell-casting anubises, sphinxes, snappy alligators and marauding centipedes in her quest to find the Generosity Gem.

\*Crystal Caves - Ms. Pac-Man has to watch out for the Neanderpacs, the legendary Pac-Foot and hungry Saber-Pacs. As she travels further inside the icy caverns, she will encounter deep molten lava rivers which she can cross with the help of ice blocks in her quest for the Truth Gem. Watch out for falling boulders and ice corridors!

\*Pac Ping Harbor - With the ghosts spreading gunpowder everywhere and the fire-breathing dragons ready to set the whole place ablaze, Ms. Pac-Man needs assistance finding the Gem of Wisdom. Avoiding Roman candles, she can use rocket launchers to help clear a path through one of the toughest and most challenging maze areas.

\*Haunted Halloween - This is Ms. Pac-Man's last chance to store up lives before meeting the Witch. Here she must hunt for the Gem of Courage, fending off Bat Draculas and Frankenpacs who charge their powers on the numerous bolts of lightning. In this nightmarish castle, lightning bolts threaten to destroy Ms. Pac-Man as she avoids evil gargoyles and vicious Hellhounds.

Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness contains 12 stages, 4 hidden stages, 3 bonus round mini-games, a BOSS round and a secret BOSS round. Players earn a gold star in every stage in which Ms. Pac-Man consumes all of the pac-dots or all seven juicy pieces of fruit. Upon defeating the Witch for the first time, players gain a Witch key that opens previously locked areas of the game; gamers earn extra gold stars by completing stages within a certain time limit, or by completing the bonus games. Those who have gathered the required number of gold stars throughout the game can then progress to the first hidden stage.

The more gold stars earned, the more likely one is to get to all four secret stages and advance to the hidden BOSS level. Multi-player mode contains three different tournament games for up to four players, boasting four maps, four characters, four hidden maps and two secret characters.

Debuting in 1981, Ms. Pac-Man, with her famous pink bow and in-your-face red lips, has long enjoyed the powerful spotlight of popularity. An independent and unstoppable woman, Ms. Pac-Man starred in the most popular video game in American arcade history. Since then, the Ms. Pac-Man game has been developed for nearly every video game platform and this September, Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness will munch its way onto retail shelves for a suggested retail price of \$29.95.

'Let's Get Ready to ... D'Oh!' -- The Simpsons Hit the Mats

Fox Interactive announced its plans to publish ''The Simpsons Wrestling" for PlayStation, a game based on the popular, long-running animated television satire.

Scheduled for a Winter 2000 release, The Simpsons Wrestling is an interactive all-out humorous 3D wrestling/fighting game, complete with all of Springfield's colorful characters including Bart, Homer, Marge, Lisa, Maggie plus Burns, Smithers, Apu, Mo and Flanders. The game can be played in two modes, tournament style single-player and grudge match with two players. If players are lucky enough to get to the bonus match, they can also unlock secret characters and venues.

'The Simpsons is America's most popular prime-time family," stated Karly

Young, director of worldwide brand marketing, Fox Interactive. ``With such an overwhelming response to our previous Simpsons titles, we want to give fans another dose of Bart and Homer -- this time for PlayStation gamers."

Mimicking other popular wrestling titles, ``Simpsons Wrestling" is the first humorous title of its genre. This 3D wrestling/fighting game will feature the characters and locations of FOX's popular television satire ``The Simpsons." Players will take on the identity of their favorite Simpsons character and battle their way to the ultimate title -- Champion of Springfield. ``The Simpsons Wrestling" emphasizes wacky physical and verbal comedy where players can control the characters' actual voices with 240 verbal taunts to choose from.

Simpsons Wrestling features 22 characters from the television show, 13 of which are playable. Each character executes his or her own exclusive moves and gestures and power moves such as Homer's Strangulator, Bart's Wedgie, Lisa's Pop Quiz and Barney's Duff Cloud Burp. Players must learn to exploit the numerous ``Power-ups" including the chocolate donut that increases speed, bowling pins that can be used as clubs and bubble gum that slows players down.

The game also contains richly detailed 3D locations from Springfield including the schoolyard, Power Plant, Simpson House, Krusty Lu Studios, Moe's Tavern, Barney's Bowl-O-Rama, Kwik-E-Mart, Town Hall, Mr. Burns' Mansion, Alien Spaceship and Itchy and Scratchy Land.

``WWF No Mercy' for Nintendo 64 and Game Boy Color

THQ and JAKKS Pacific announced their new World Wrestling Federation licensed video game release, ``WWF No Mercy," developed by AKI Corporation for Nintendo 64 and Game Boy Color game consoles.

The announcement coincides with the naming of their ``WWF Wrestlemania 2000(TM)" game as a finalist for ``Best Console Fighting Game of the Year" from the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences (AIAS). If named the winner May 11 at the Electronics Entertainment Expo, it will be a ``three-peat" for AKI/THQ team series, which has already won the honor for two consecutive years. Both the Nintendo 64 and Game Boy Color versions of ``WWF No Mercy" are scheduled to ship in fall 2000.

With more than 65 WWF Superstars to choose from, enhanced graphics, plus all-new gameplay modes including the high-flying, hair-raising Ladder Match(TM) and hard-hitting Tag Team Match modes, ``WWF No Mercy" players will enjoy even more of what makes WWF bedlam so popular. The Create-A-Superstar feature is back and more robust than ever, allowing players to design characters in unprecedented detail, from physical size and appearance, to personality, attitude, and of course signature moves.

``WWF No Mercy" also takes advantage of the Nintendo 64 Transfer Pak, so Game Boy Color players can wreak havoc and earn points on the go, then transfer the data to their Nintendo 64 system and continue the pandemonium.

``After the overwhelming success of 'WWF WrestleMania 2000,' resulting in sales in excess of 1 million units in less than two months, we are certainly prepared for 'WWF No Mercy' to meet very positive customer response," said Alison Locke, senior vice president of sales and marketing for THQ.

''Following the momentum generated with 'WWF Wrestlemania 2000,' we believe 'WWF No Mercy' will be another award-winning game, delighting fans and further elevating the entire WWF franchise," said Jennifer Richmond, vice president of marketing, JAKKS Pacific Inc.

''All along, THQ and JAKKS have proven their ability to create the WWF environment on the top gaming platforms with incredible authenticity," said Jim Byrne, senior vice president of marketing, WWFE. ''WWF No Mercy' is the latest creation from this successful partnership, and we feel that WWF fans and gamers can look forward to another great product."

### 3DO Announces World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks for The PlayStation

The 3DO Company announced the World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks game for the PlayStation game console at this year's Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3). The World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks game brings home the extreme action of the hardcore bouts of tank combat that take place when infamous gladiators are equipped with high-caliber weaponry and sent out to conduct a campaign of terror that's different every single time the game is played.

Set in the post-apocalyptic world of the near future, World Destruction League coverage focuses upon the vicious competitions waged between participants in the most fiercely brutal televised sport ever witnessed by mankind. Assuming the role of a rising star, players take control of one of 9 monstrous tanks, each of which boasts tremendous special abilities, unique advantages, and its own method of handling, as they fight and die for the honor of holding the championship title. While combatants struggle for control of the tournament, two over-the-top announcers call out all the cheap shots and don't pull any punches.

Players will compete on a global circuit that covers six international post-apocalyptic environments including Italy, Moscow, Tokyo, Canada and the top secret NORAD Facility. As the battle rages through the mud, sand and snow, they'll stop and destroy recognizable landmarks such as the Tower of Pisa, St. Basil's Cathedral and Tokyo's Ginza District. Provided aspiring champions aren't too busy fending off nine win-at-all-costs competitors, they can even redecorate their famous surroundings using devastating new weapons like artillery strikes, shock rings, death blossoms, and the nano wall.

With over thirty different battlefields to choose from and dedicated support for two-player head to head split-screen trials, World Destruction League is the most high-stakes game of tank warfare ever to storm onto the PlayStation game console. Totally accessible thanks to a default pick up and play system, players of all ages and skill levels can enjoy ten deadly modes of play which include Gauntlet, King of the Hill, Convoy, Renegade and Frenzy amongst others.

''Gamers love tanks, and we've had great success with tank games. Our customers have been teaching us what they want, and we're going to give it to them," said Trip Hawkins, chairman and CEO of The 3DO Company. ''World Destruction League will have more and better tank gameplay but will also go over the top and let you make fun of the situation and laugh it up."

## Square Ships Vagrant Story for the PlayStation

Square Electronic Arts announced the release of Vagrant Story for the PlayStation game console.

The title, a medieval adventure role-playing game (RPG) with a unique battle system, gives the player the ability to attack different regions of the enemy. By inflicting damage on certain body parts, the player can lessen the effectiveness of enemy attacks, allowing the player to use a more strategic approach when in battle.

Vagrant Story puts players in the role of Agent Ashley Riot, a member of a special breed of knights known as "Risk-Breakers" who protect the government from dangerous and hardened criminals. When a Duke is assassinated, Ashley finds that he has been falsely accused of slaying one of the very people he has vowed to protect and must flee into hiding to uncover the truth behind the murder.

As Ashley, players embark on a labyrinthine path through a richly detailed medieval city to unlock the mystery behind the murder and expose a villain who claims to be a prophet of the Apocalypse. Along the way, players must evade the Duke's men and face various deadly monsters in one-on-one combat as they travel through dungeons, fortresses and underground passageways in their search.

Vagrant Story offers a full 360-degree world to explore. Players can look in every direction -- left, right, up, down, and even straight up at the sky -- just as real humans. Vagrant Story also includes a host of innovative features such as real-time action that lets players roam freely throughout the medieval city and a weapon customization system that allows players to mix and match different weapon and armor parts to create custom medieval weaponry.

"Vagrant Story creates the feeling of playing in an action movie," said Kenji Mimura, marketing manager at Square EA. "With cinematic camera work and a stunning level of realism, the game fully immerses the player in a fantasy world."

Square implemented two new battlesystems to enhance the fighting and provide for more realistic action in Vagrant Story. The "Chain Craft System," which is made up of the Chain and Defense Abilities, requires both coordination and timing. Executed successfully, players can chain attacks or perform counterattacks for optimal damage and recovery. The "Targeted Attack System" creates a spherical map of potential targets on the enemy, letting players use more strategy in deciding where they will attack. On top of these two innovative systems, a host of special techniques known as "Break Arts" and magic spells can be unveiled, providing players with even more attack and defense options to choose from.

In addition to these unique features, Vagrant Story uses stunning movie-like cinematics throughout the game that draws players into the action. It also presents cinematic qualities like shifting camera angles and a fast-paced editing style which cuts between different perspectives during action sequences. Perspective also changes from third-person to first-person at certain sequences in the story, offering a more fully realized 3D environment.

Vagrant Story is compatible with the DUALSHOCK(tm) analog controller and has a suggested retail price of US \$40. The game carries an ESRB rating of ``T" (Teen).

## Midway Sports Asylum Releases ``Kurt Warner's Arena Football Unleashed" Exclusively for the PlayStation

Midway Sports Asylum, the sports brand of leading software industry publisher and developer Midway Games Inc., announced that ``Kurt Warner's Arena Football Unleashed" for the PlayStation game console will be available in retail outlets today.

``Kurt Warner's Arena Football Unleashed" expands upon the excitement of the Arena Football League (AFL), also known as the ``50-Yard Indoor War," with six-on-six, wall-slamming, helmet- rattling action and outrageous player animations. With an exclusive AFL license, all of the AFL teams and players are included.

``Kurt Warner's Arena Football Unleashed" also features the short AFL fields and endzone nets that keep the ball in play and provide players with ``never-a-dull-moment" action.

``Kurt Warner's Arena Football Unleashed' delivers Midway Sports Asylum's hallmark arcade-style hard hits and rule-breaking game play," said Helene Sheeler, vice president of marketing, Midway Games West. ``This game is hard-core, with over-the-top football action that isn't available in any other licensed football video game."

In April, Midway signed an exclusive licensing deal with Arena Football League hero and Super Bowl XXXIV MVP Kurt Warner. Midway has licensed use of Warner's name and likeness for in-game and promotional opportunities.

Warner, a former Arena Football player for the Iowa Barnstormers, achieved notoriety last season when he established himself as the top quarterback in the NFL by winning both the regular season and Super Bowl MVP awards.

``Kurt Warner's Arena Football Unleashed" features all 17 Arena Football League teams and arenas, adding to the overall gameplay experience. Midway Sports Asylum expects gamers to pick up on the growing interest in arena football, bolstered by Kurt Warner's high- profile success, and the extreme-styled gameplay the title exclusively offers.

### ``Kurt Warner's Arena Football Unleashed" Key Features

- \* Six-on-six arcade-style action with no penalties;
- \* In-game announcing by sportscaster Larry Beil;
- \* Hard hits -- head-butts, body slams, head slaps, upper cuts and more -- not found anywhere else;
- \* Special codes let players make Kurt Warner the quarterback of any AFL team;
- \* Realistic model of arena football field: a padded indoor surface, 85 feet by 50 yards, with eight-yard endzones and 48-inch-high sideline barriers;
- \* Includes all 17 AFL teams and arenas;
- \* Real AFL-style gameplay: forward pass that rebounds off the endzone net is a live ball and in play until it touches the playing surface;

- \* Kick field goals through AFL-style goal posts (9 feet wide, with a crossbar height of 15 feet -- NFL goal posts are 18-1/2 feet wide, with the crossbar at 10 feet);
- \* Power Up Mode gets your team ``charged up";
- \* Play Editor with customizable playbooks and audibles;
- \* Four-player support for wall-slamming team action.

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A-ONE's Headline News  
The Latest in Computer Technology News  
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

### AOL Agrees To Pay \$3.5 Million Fine

America Online Inc. has agreed to pay a \$3.5 million fine to settle federal allegations it violated financial reporting rules by counting advertising costs as assets, the Securities and Exchange Commission announced Monday.

The advertising costs in question included AOL's well-known practice of flooding the mail with computer disks and a special offer to solicit new customers for the company's Internet service.

The expenses totaled about \$385 million by Sept. 30, 1996. The SEC said AOL should have reported those costs as expenses rather than assets on its balance sheets.

If not for the improper accounting, the world's biggest Internet services company would have shown a net loss rather than profits for six of eight quarters in its fiscal years beginning Oct. 1, 1994, and Oct. 1, 1995, the SEC said.

``This action reflects the (SEC's) close scrutiny of accounting practices in the technology industry to make certain that the financial disclosure of companies in this area reflects present reality, not hopes about the future," SEC Enforcement Director Richard Walker said in a statement.

AOL, based in Dulles, Va., said in a statement that it will restate its financial results from 1995 to 1997 to reflect the change. The company noted that it had stopped engaging in the accounting practices in question more than 3 1/2 years ago.

Accounting rules do not allow a company to count direct-response advertising costs as assets unless it can show from past experience that future revenues resulting from the advertising will exceed its costs, the SEC said.

The SEC said AOL, whose customer base was rapidly growing and changing, did not have sufficient evidence to assume that its advertising costs would be adequately recovered by new business.

AOL, which now has more than 20 million subscribers, neither admitted to nor denied the allegations in settling the case, a civil lawsuit filed by



the SEC in federal court in Washington.

The SEC said it was the first time it had taken an enforcement action against a publicly owned company for improperly reporting on advertising costs from soliciting new customers.

In January, the agency accused database software maker Informix Corp. of fraudulently inflating its revenues and earnings over several years. Informix agreed in a settlement with the SEC to refrain from future violations and to cooperate with the agency's continuing investigation of the case. Informix, based in Menlo Park, Calif., neither admitted to nor denied the allegations.

The SEC has been pushing publicly traded companies in general to improve their financial reporting and avoid manipulating their earnings to meet Wall Street analysts' projections.

The agency in September accused 68 people and companies - including Hall of Fame quarterback and Atlanta businessman Fran Tarkenton - of accounting fraud in the first nationwide "sweep" against inflating earnings and other alleged reporting misconduct.

#### U.S. To Reject Microsoft Proposal

The government was poised Wednesday to defend its proposed breakup of Microsoft and likely to urge a federal judge to reject milder sanctions suggested as alternatives by the software giant.

In its reply to arguments outlined by Microsoft last week, the government was expected to reinforce its assertion that a breakup would be the best way to prevent illegal behavior by a company found to have acted in wide violation of federal antitrust laws.

Under a plan submitted last month by the Justice Department and 17 of the states that successfully sued Microsoft on antitrust charges, Microsoft would be broken up into two companies. One would develop the company's dominant Windows computer operating system and the other, everything else, including Microsoft's Office software and its Internet services. The two companies would have to stay separate for at least 10 years.

The government plan also would impose numerous temporary restrictions on Microsoft's business practices while the case moves through the appeals process.

Microsoft was found to have violated federal antitrust laws through predatory and anticompetitive behavior in an April 3 ruling by U.S. District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson.

Microsoft plans to appeal the ruling.

In its formal response to the government's plan, the Redmond, Wash.-based company asked Jackson to dismiss the government's proposal, saying such a severe punishment lacks a basis. Microsoft also suggested that splitting up the company would have a dangerous impact on the country's high-tech industry and economy.

Microsoft instead offered Jackson milder remedies it promised to impose on

itself. The remedies would curb the company's conduct against competitors and clients dealing with rivals.

The brief filed Wednesday by the government essentially will be the last official word before Jackson holds a hearing on the issue. The next round in the antitrust battle takes place in the judge's courtroom on May 24, when both the government and Microsoft will offer arguments in support of their proposals. Jackson is likely to set out a timetable for proceeding with the case at the hearing.

#### Microsoft Alters Outlook E-mail

Charged with enabling easy access for computer viruses like the Love Bug, Microsoft is altering its popular Outlook e-mail software to prevent users from running any "executable" program attachments, good or bad.

As an additional safeguard, any time a computer program attempts to access Outlook's address book or tries to send e-mail via Outlook, users will receive a warning and will be urged not to allow it.

The software "patch" announced Monday for Microsoft Outlook 98 and Office 2000 will be available on a Microsoft Web site starting next week.

But as a tradeoff for the added security, users will find that Outlook will also block some attachments that are harmless or possibly even beneficial.

The moves come two weeks after the Love Bug, also known as the "ILOVEYOU" virus, clogged e-mail systems around the world and infected millions of computers, destroying music and graphics files stored on many machines. The virus, which only worked against users of Microsoft Outlook, caused as much as \$10 billion in damage, mostly in lost work time.

"We've been taking a really hard look at the security issues with regard to Outlook over the past few weeks," said Steven Sinofsky, senior vice president for Microsoft Office, a package of software programs that includes Outlook.

Sinofsky said many of the perceived security lapses in Outlook are related to features that make the program more appealing for users.

"We are constantly in a balance between power, flexibility and openness versus security," he said, maintaining that capabilities lost to the new safeguards can be substituted through alternative distribution methods, such as having a program available on a Web page.

Reaction from computer security experts was mixed.

"The e-mail alerts are very, very good. But preventing every single kind of executable from ever running is overkill," said Ira Winkler, president of Internet Security Advisors Group. "I use executables to encrypt the contracts I send to my clients. If I'm going to have to change the way I do business, there are going to be many others out there who will have to do the same thing."

Winkler noted that some companies use executable e-mail attachments to do business - for example, delivering greeting cards and advertisements - and

could be hurt by the changes to Outlook.

Microsoft Outlook will still accept file attachments, such as MP3 music files or Microsoft Word documents. While viruses can be hidden within those documents, the new address book and e-mail alerts will help stop their spread, Sinofsky said.

Legitimate programs that access Outlook, such as the synchronization software for Palm organizers and other handheld devices, will also be flagged, though users can simply click "Yes" and allow the transfer of information to take place.

Carey Nachenberg, chief researcher at Symantec Corp.'s Anti-Virus Research Center, said Microsoft should be applauded for the new safeguards, but insisted that even more needs to be done to protect users from viruses.

"With 300 million PCs running nearly the same hardware and software, and with all of them connected to each other nearly all the time, I take more of a paranoid approach," said Nachenberg, whose researchers aided Microsoft in its Outlook patch. "I think this is just a start. Most viruses are sent via e-mail, but there are many other ways to slip malicious code into a computer network."

#### Microsoft Flags Mac IE 5 Security Gap

A glitch that affects the browser's Java implementation resurfaces after a three-year hiatus.

Microsoft Corp. acknowledged Wednesday that a potential security gap has resurfaced in the Mac version of Internet Explorer after a three-year hiatus.

"We believe that this is going to affect very few people, but obviously, since it's a security issue, we take it very seriously, and we're working on an update," said Irving Kwong, a product manager with Microsoft's Macintosh Business Unit. However, Kwong said he couldn't specify when the fix would be ready.

The company blamed the flaw -- what it calls a "Java redirect issue" -- on its implementation of Apple's Macintosh Runtime for Java, or MRJ, in the browser.

The glitch, which cropped up under Internet Explorer 3.0 in 1997, resurfaced again in IE 5. "With Internet Explorer 5, when we implemented Apple's MRJ, we tried to create a more secure Java session by offering the whole Secure Sockets Layer," Kwong said. "Doing that, we opened up a hole that was there before."

Microsoft said security would be compromised only under a specific set of conditions: "Our current understanding of the problem is that when an unknowing user visits a Web site with malicious code, the site could download an image from another Web site, such as an intranet that the user has permission to access, without the user's permission."

Kwong said a malicious Web developer would need to know details of the exact path within the intranet from that specific user's computer. Users behind a firewall or on a network that employs intelligent authentication

are safe from the glitch, he said.

The company recommended that concerned users disable Internet Explorer's use of Java until the problem is fixed.

In the meantime, "we've not seen anybody who's been harmed by this or has been able to exploit it," Kwong said.

#### Apple Delays Final Release of Operating Software

Apple Computer Inc. on Monday delayed the release of the final version of its eagerly awaited next-generation operating system software until next year to give software developers and customers more time to work with the new system.

Speaking at its annual software developers conference here, Apple Chief Executive Steve Jobs said the company will release a so-called public beta, or test, version of Mac OS X sometime this summer, instead of releasing a final version to customers this summer, as previously planned.

The company said the final version of Mac OS X will be preinstalled on new Macintosh computers in January, which is still in line with its earlier schedules.

"That is the schedule, and we are very confident in that," Jobs told Apple's annual Worldwide Developer Conference, where over 3,600 software developers have gathered to get updates on Apple's software schedule.

At the conference, developers will receive a CD preview of Mac OS X, called Preview 4, which includes a version of Microsoft Corp.'s Internet Explorer 5.0, developed specifically for the Macintosh.

Apple executives tried to put the best spin on the delay, which was also downplayed by Wall Street analysts and some developers attending the conference.

"Really, we are delivering the same software at the same time, but with different names," Phil Schiller, Apple's vice president of worldwide marketing, said in an interview. "Customers have asked us for a public beta ... That release will be called public beta, instead of calling it Version 1.0."

Schiller said that the change in the schedule was primarily driven by developer and customer feedback, and not because of any major technical glitches in the software.

"Each release adds new capabilities and features," he said. "I think what we have delivered today is developer complete. There is certainly more work to finish off the details of it. There is some fine tuning, but the majority of the product is in place, and it's working beautifully now."

Apple also said it was slashing the price of its Web applications software WebObjects to \$699 from \$50,000 to put the technology in the hands of more software developers.

"We have a nice revenue stream, but we've decided to take this technology and put it in the hands of more people," Jobs told the conference. He said

Apple has over 3,000 customers using WebObjects to create Web applications that are ten times faster than other Web development software.

Analysts who follow the company were not concerned over the delay.

"I am never particularly surprised with software delays," said David Bailey, an analyst with Gerard Klauer Mattison & Co. "I wouldn't really worry about the schedule. It (the software) is more important from a strategic point of view. It shows that the company is more than just the iMac and the iBook."

Cupertino, Calif.-based Apple also said that more than 50 million copies of its QuickTime 4 player software used to view video over the Web have been distributed for both Macintosh computers and for those using Microsoft Corp.'s Windows operating system.

### Corel Kills WordPerfect For The Mac

In an announcement that should take no one by surprise, Corel said on Friday that it will no longer develop WordPerfect 3.5 for the Mac. The software--once a major competitor to Microsoft Word--was last upgraded in 1996 and was never made PowerPC-native. Graham Brown, who heads Corel's WordPerfect engineering team, told MacWEEK that it would have taken another two years to develop a PowerPC version. Corel will continue to offer Windows and Linux versions of WordPerfect.

Corel ended technical support for the Mac version last year, although the company's Web site still includes support information.

By canceling WordPerfect, Brown said that Corel can devote greater resources to its Mac graphics applications, including its flagship CorelDraw product and the graphics packages recently acquired from MetaCreations: Painter, Bryce, Kai's Power Tools and KPT Vector Effects. The company also offers Corel Knockout 1.1, a masking program developed by Ultimatte.

"We can do a greater service to more people this way," he said.

Brown readily admitted that WordPerfect for Mac still has many loyal users who will be disappointed by the decision. Corel frequently gets requests for a new version, and Brown noted that many users have downloaded Corel's free WordPerfect enhancement pack, which includes a variety of software add-ons.

In April, MacWEEK reported that Corel will face a difficult challenge in upgrading the MetaCreations products, particularly Bryce. "Bryce is a very complex application, and the 3-D piece is going to be a challenge for us to fully get up to speed," said Corel graphics software chief Ian LeGrow at the time.

Corel has caught plenty of heat from Mac users, especially graphics professionals, who believe the company has not devoted sufficient resources to the Mac. However, in a recent interview with MacWEEK, Painter creator Mark Zimmer said that Mac users "will be pleasantly surprised" by what they see from Corel. "As I understand it, Corel is actually seeking to establish a larger Mac presence through these acquisitions," he said, referring to Painter, Bryce and KPT. All three programs, he said, "have a

fabulous Mac following and (Corel) knows it. I think you are going to see many more professionals using Corel products."

Zimmer, along with Tom Hedges and John Derry, are serving as consultants to Corel as its software engineers work to upgrade Painter to a new version.

#### It's Official: Lycos Sold For \$12.5 Billion

Terra Networks is buying Lycos in a stock-for-stock transaction valued at \$12.5 billion, sources confirmed ahead of the announcement.

The new company will be called Terra Lycos Inc. Bob Davis, the president and CEO of Lycos, will be CEO of the combined firm. Juan Villalonga, chairman and CEO of Telefonica, the Spanish phone giant that owns Terra Networks, will serve as chairman, the sources said.

Abel Linares, who is CEO of Terra, is expected to become the chief operating officer of the new company. Ted Philip, who is the chief financial officer, will remain as chief financial officer of Terra Lycos.

Lycos shareholders would receive \$97.55 per share in Terra ordinary shares, or their equivalent in Terra American Depositary Receipts.

At the completion of the deal, Lycos shareholders will have a 37 percent stake in the combined company.

As part of the deal, Telefonica has committed to underwrite a \$2 billion rights offering by Terra before the merger closes. Sources said Terra Lycos expects to have more than \$3 billion in cash after the offering.

The sweeping agreement also involves what sources described as a "broad strategic relationship" with Bertelsmann AG, the German-owned media company, which will buy about \$1 billion worth of advertising and services from Terra Lycos over five years.

Terra Lycos, meanwhile, will gain access to Bertelsmann's books, music, television, film and other media content, on preferred terms.

This alliance builds on the existing Lycos-Bertelsmann joint venture in Europe, Lycos Europe, of which Bertelsmann will remain a significant shareholder.

Terra Lycos will also have a 49 percent ownership stake in a wireless joint venture that is going to be established with Telefonica.

The combined company will have pro forma 2000 revenues of about \$500 million and together currently have an estimated 50 million unique users and 175 million page views per day.

#### House: FCC Hands Off on Web Charges

Driven by phantoms and fear of real-life bureaucrats and lawyers, the House voted Tuesday to permanently ban the Federal Communications Commission from

extending certain telephone access charges to the Internet.

Much of the House debate centered on a rumor spreading on the Internet about a phony piece of legislation - sponsored by an equally nonexistent Rep. Tony Schnell - that would supposedly impose a per-minute access charge on Internet service providers, ultimately to be passed on to consumers.

Congressional offices have been bombarded with thousands of e-mail messages protesting the false move, which some lawmakers said was the main reason the House was rushing to consider the real piece of legislation. It passed on voice vote.

"What we are considering today is a fabricated solution to an imaginary problem," said Rep. John Dingell, D-Mich. "We have here a bill that solves a problem that doesn't really exist."

Sponsors, however, said the measure would put the force of law behind an existing FCC universal service access charge exemption for Internet service providers and prevent some local telephone companies from winning challenges to the exemption in court.

"The issue is not bogus," said Rep. W.J. "Billy" Tauzin, R-La. "There are real lawyers litigating in the courts on this issue today."

FCC spokeswoman Joy Howell repeated Tuesday that the agency has "no intention of imposing access charges to the Internet. Congress has the prerogative ... and we respect that right."

The measure, recommended to Congress by a majority of the Advisory Commission on Electronic Commerce, is one of three bills being rushed through the House this month as part of the Republican "E-Contract 2000" agenda. The House last week passed a five-year extension of the current Internet tax moratorium and next week will begin moving a bill repealing the 3 percent excise tax on telephone service.

Rep. Fred Upton, R-Mich., said the access charge measure would "prevent a stopwatch from being placed on the Internet" by ensuring that the FCC would never extend to the Internet the existing access charges on long-distance calls.

These charges, paid by long-distance carriers to local phone companies to connect their calls, partly support universal service in high-cost poor and rural areas. The costs are usually passed on by long-distance companies to their customers.

The legislation does not address the long-term problem of whether Internet service providers should eventually help provide this universal service by paying for their use of the local telephone network, particularly as more phone service migrates to the Internet. Some lawmakers said the bill wouldn't ban access charges on the Internet that pay for something other than universal service.

"This bill only does part of it," said Rep. Ed Markey, D-Mass. "We're going to protect the phone companies so they can make more profits."

The bill doesn't preclude the possibility that Internet long-distance calls made on personal computers might someday have to contribute to the universal service fund. There is a growing debate about whether calls routed over the Internet should be treated differently from those made on

the traditional phone system.

Jan Horsfall, president and chief executive officer of Phonefree.com, an Internet voice phone service provider, called the House bill a ``legislative wolf in sheep's clothing" that could unfairly lead to higher costs for Internet phone users.

``What Congress is really trying to protect is the traditional telecommunications giants who are slower, more expensive but obviously more influential in Washington," Horsfall said.

#### Anti-Spam Forces Gaining Ground

The daily furor over unsolicited electronic mail seems to have died somewhat, but the cause is alive and well in Washington, D.C., and there is even a new proposal to offer bounties for errant bulk commercial e-mailers.

The idea of establishing a bounty for spammers' scalps came up during the Spam Summit 2000 conference, held recently in the nation's capital.

The problem with anti-spam laws, some participants said, is that unless the unsolicited message onslaught is particularly troublesome, Internet service providers (ISPs) have little incentive to pursue the spammers in court.

A bounty, however, might make the idea of pursuing spammers in court more appealing. Bounties could even be distributed to individual Netizens, instead of just ISPs.

Ed Taliaferro, vice president of international auditing and information security at RCN Telecom Services, a company that offers bundled phone, cable and Internet services, said the bounty idea marks "the beginning of more proactive initiatives" on the spam front.

"People will start to realize that the reactive mode is more costly," Taliaferro said.

Overall, the anti-spam lobby appears to be gaining ground.

"It's remarkable, considering this is a slow year for Congress," said online privacy consultant Jason Catlett, president of Junkbusters. "There's a lot of consensus between industry associations, activists and what ordinary people - constituents - want. Even the Direct Marketing Association wants to remove fraudulent spam and spam that misrepresents its origin . . . There's a strong alignment of interests here."

Such was the mood at the Spam Summit. And the number 3113 came up a lot. As in, H.R. 3113, the Unsolicited Electronic Mail Act of 2000.

The bill, introduced last year by Rep. Heather Wilson, R-N.M., was amended in March with provisions of another bill, California's Rep. Gary Miller's Can Spam Act, H.R. 2162. It was passed by the House Commerce Committee's subcommittee on Telecommunications, Trade and Consumer Protection in March, and awaits consideration by the Commerce committee before the full House of Representatives weighs in.



Among other things, the provisions of the bill would:

- \* Require unsolicited commercial e-mail messages to be labeled.
- \* Prohibit the use of an ISP's facilities to send unsolicited commercial e-mail if the provider's policy forbids such uses.
- \* Give ISPs the right to sue spammers that violate their policies.

Many activists involved in the fight against spam applaud 3113, and the mood will become downright jubilant if the Senate decides to take up its own spam bill this session.

According to several sources, who did not want to be identified, a companion bill will be introduced in the Senate during the next several weeks.

"Congress is paying more attention to privacy issues in general, which is part of the reason spam legislation may do better this year than in the past," said David Sorkin, a law professor at the John Marshall Law School's Center for Information Technology and Privacy Law.

Sunil Paul, chairman of Brightmail, was less enthusiastic about legislative remedies to spam, mainly because, he said, "we analyzed 10 million pieces of spam in 1999, and there's virtually no compliance with state laws."

Why, he asked, should a federal law modeled after many state laws perform any better?

The future of spam suppression, Paul said, rests with technologies such as Brightmail's, which lets ISPs quickly identify spam and remove it before reaching a Netizen's mail box.

"Now," he said, "The anti-spam community sees hope on the technology front."

In Brightmail's case, the company receives millions of spam messages from corporations and individuals. The company's "Spam Masters" are constantly analyzing the data and sending hourly updates to client ISPs about spam mail. The ISPs can then update their software to filter out the unsolicited e-mails.

#### AOL Offers Free Service To Schools

America Online Inc. will offer a free service to schools that will make it easier for students to use the Internet, which many educators feel is too unwieldy for classroom use, company officials said Tuesday.

AOLSchool, to be launched Wednesday, will have separate portals for elementary, middle and high school students that will help pupils reach the best educational Web sites, officials said.

Students will see no ads - other than the AOL logo - will not be able to purchase goods online and will be blocked from accessing pornography or other offensive material, officials said. Students will be able to send e-mail and instant messages to encourage group online activities or to establish pen pals in faraway schools.

The only revenue, which will not cover the cost of providing the service, will be from ads targeted at teachers and administrators in separate areas inaccessible to students, they said.

"We don't think of this as a business opportunity," chief executive Steve Case said in a conference call.

Others said the initiative sounds good but raises concerns.

"I'm suspicious," said Andrew Hagelshaw, executive director of the Center for Commercial-Free Public Education, based in Oakland, Calif.

The venture could be a cash cow in the future because it will help build brand loyalty and perhaps create a generation of future AOL customers, he said.

Also, schools spend vast sums on supplies, textbooks and other goods, so a company like Amazon.com or an office supply chain could negotiate exclusive rights to market their goods to school administrators, he said.

"I would tell school boards: Before you sign up for this, make sure to approve a commercialism policy that lays out what activities are acceptable," he added.

Alex Molnar, head of the Center for the Analysis of Commercialism in Education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, said AOLSchool sounds like an improvement over ventures such as Channel One, which provides free television service to schools by featuring ads targeted at youths.

"The fact they have made a decision to keep it clear of ads is good," he said. "But we'll have to keep our eyes on this."

Case declined to give the cost of building and providing the service and stressed that it is a contribution to the nation's schools.

No marketing information would be gathered on students because they only use their first name and a password to access the service, officials said.

About 95 percent of schools are connected to the Internet, although most educators feel their already hectic schedules make it difficult for them to use its full potential in the classroom, Case said.

AOL, based in Dulles, worked with education groups representing school boards, administrators and teachers to find the Web sites to be accessed by students. Among the sites featured are the Library of Congress; Ask Dr. Universe, a site run by Washington State University where scientific questions are answered; and webmath.com which gives step-by-step solutions to math problems, from decimals to dreaded word problems.

Schools will be notified in newspaper ads and through various education associations. The program was launched now to give schools time to install the software and have it operating for fall classes.

Critics of the commercialization of America's schools have complained about ads that appear in some textbooks and the exclusive contracts Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola have negotiated with education officials to put their machines in schools. Other companies put company logos in hallways or on buses.

## Compaq Unveils \$999 Notebook

Compaq Computer Corp. on Thursday unveiled its low-priced \$999 Presario 1200 XL-450 notebook computer, available immediately.

The Presario 1200 series is powered by an Advanced Micro Devices Inc. AMD K62-450 megahertz processor and is equipped with 32 megabytes (MB) of random access memory (RAM) and a 5.9 gigabyte (GB) hard drive. It also contains preloaded software such as Microsoft Corp.'s Microsoft Works 2000, Money 2000, Word 2000 and Encarta 2000.

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